

Attorney Docket: 25310-1

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**METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR RENDERING ELECTRONIC DATA**

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This application claims priority from United States Provisional 60/203,809 filed  
May 19, 2000, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to methods and systems for rendering electronic data  
and delivering the data in a variety of layouts and formats.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The standardization of communication protocols and data formats have permitted  
the World-Wide Web (WWW) and the Internet to revolutionize the manner in which  
electronic communications occur. Web browsers (equipped with the appropriate external  
viewer plugins) such as Internet Explorer, Netscape, and the like facilitate the viewing  
of various data formats on display screens. Further, external viewers such as Adobe  
Acrobat and the like, may facilitate viewing data formats on display screens independent

of web browsers. Moreover, there are a variety of data formats not directed to viewing data directly on a display screen but, rather, directed to formatting electronic data prior to delivering the data to another device (e.g. printer, and the like). Additionally, a variety of translation or software languages permit data formats to be converted from one data format to another, or permit data formats to be enhanced in some way by altering the presentation of the data when displayed. Some of these translation languages and data formats include by way of example only, Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), PostScript (PS), Portable Document Format (PDF), Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML), Printer Control Language (PCL), Extended Markup Language (XML), Extended Stylesheets Language (XSL), Wireless Markup Language (WML), and the like.

Furthermore, a wide variety of data formats permits defining non-text data types, these data type definitions allow viewing graphics, images, video, audio (listening), and the like. Recently, many viewers (made operable with traditional browser via plugins) have been developed to permit the displaying of data formats on any communications device, such as wireless phones, hand-held computing devices, car computing devices, appliances, stand alone printers, digital video, digital cameras, and the like.

Recent industry consortiums have attempted to further revolutionize the area of data delivery and presentation by creating an industry data format from XML which divorces data content descriptions from data presentation layouts. In other words, XML is an open industry standard for defining and separating the data content from the data presentation. Such a standard permits more efficient electronic communications and transactions, by permitting users to transmit data back and forth even while each user



user, the resulting display of that translated data is of almost of no value to the requesting user because the translator used to provide the layout could not adequately address how disparate data types co-exist on the rendered electronic media. These complex layouts are often somewhat better handled by batch programming utilities which can store and better calculate how a document layout is to appear when being translated from one format to another format. Yet, even these batch programming utilities still largely perform canned operations which result in the layout or presentation of the translated data being largely corrupted from the original data format.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, an object of the invention is to provide methods and a system for rendering data in a user defined output format regardless of the complex data layouts required. Moreover, the data rendering may be performed in stream as opposed to in batch mode resulting in improved performance and efficiency. This permits users to truly realize the benefits of seamlessly translate between multiple data formats without a loss in presentation or performance during the translations.

Additional objectives, advantages and novel features of the invention will be set forth in the description that follows and, in part, will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon examining or practicing the invention. The objects and advantages of the invention may be realized and obtained by means of the instrumentalities and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims. To achieve the foregoing and other objects and in accordance with the purpose of the present invention, methods and a system are provided for rendering electronic data.

A method of electronically rendering data on a computer readable medium is provided, comprising receiving one or more data objects including text objects and floating objects generating floating areas to house the floating objects. The floating areas are outputted at predetermined locations and textual areas are generated to house the text objects, these textual areas comprising an outputted area where the floating areas have been removed, the text objects are then output adjacent to the floating areas.

Moreover, a system for electronically rendering data on a computer readable medium is provided, comprising one or more text objects, one or more floating objects, and a set of executable instructions operable to create and output data by dividing from input data a set of textual areas and a set of floating areas and operable to populate the textual areas with the text objects and the floating areas with the floating objects.

Further, a method of electronically providing a footnote body on a page in a computer readable medium is provided, comprising identifying one or more page objects including reference objects and body objects, generating a body area located at the bottom of a page to house the body objects and generating a reference area located above the body area to house the reference objects. Next, geometric rectangles are formed to house the reference and body areas such that the body area is expanded to accommodate an additional body object while the reference area is decreased and an overall area associated with the page remains constant.

Still other aspects of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following description of a preferred embodiment, which is by way of illustration, one of the best modes contemplated for carrying out the invention. As will be realized, the invention is capable of other different and obvious aspects, all without

departing from the invention. Accordingly, the drawings and descriptions are illustrative in nature and not restrictive.

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

5           The accompanying drawings, incorporated in and forming part of the specification, illustrate several aspects of the present invention and, together with their descriptions, serve to explain the principles of the invention. In the drawings:

Fig. 1 depicts a flow diagram of a method of rendering data;

Fig. 2 depicts a flow diagram of a method of rendering data;

10          Fig. 3 depicts a diagram of a system of rendering electronic data;

Fig. 4 depicts a block diagram of electronic data;

Fig. 5 depicts a transition diagram of rendered electronic data;

Fig. 6 depicts a block diagram of electronic data;

Fig. 7 depicts a transition diagram of rendered electronic data;

15          Fig. 8 depicts a diagram of wrapping text;

Fig. 9 depicts a flow diagram for rendering footnotes; and

Fig. 10 depicts a transition diagram for rendering footnotes.

### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

20           The present invention provides methods and a system which the rendering of electronic data. One embodiment of the present invention is implemented using web browser technologies including well-known software programming languages (e.g., C, C++, Java, Active X, Active Server Pages, XSLT, Xpath) and Internet communication

protocols (TCP/IP). Of course other programming languages and communications protocols (now known or hereafter developed) may be also readily employed.

Electronic data may be logically represented as one or more electronic pages for purposes of presenting these data in specific layouts. In this sense, the page defines a logical area in these electronic data. Moreover, since a page is a logical area associated with these electronic data, the area is adjustable such that the entire electronic data could be viewed as a single electronic page, or conversely the entire electronic data could be viewed as multiple electronic pages. As one skilled in the art will readily appreciate, electronic data may be conceptually viewed in a variety of ways such as documents, pages, lines, paragraphs, and other ways. Correspondingly, as used herein the term "page" and "electronic data" are used interchangeably and intended to include the broadest possible meaning.

Accordingly, data which are to be rendered have an output layout which defines their presentations after having been rendered. These data are decomposed into their constituent types, where floating objects (non-text data types such as graphics, images, video, footnote bodies, and the like) and text objects (text data types such as tables, character text, and the like) are separated.

Initially, the rendered data represent a single rectangle occupying all the text objects contained within the original electronic data (non rendered format). Next, areas within the rendered data, where the floating objects are to reside are defined by geometric rectangles which enclose the floating objects, these areas are linked together to form a linked list, the traversal of the list is defined as the floating object path. These rectangular areas are subtracted from the initial single rectangle, and the remaining area





defined by an output data format of step 140. An exemplary output data format of the present invention is PDF.

In step 130 a formatting operation is performed such that areas are identified in the output format as locations to receive the floating objects. These locations in the output format are defined and reserved in the electronic data to be rendered in step 160. These areas are defined as geometric rectangles in step 150, and each such area is linked together to form a linked list in step 170. The traversal of the linked list defines the floating object path.

Next, the area, in the electronic data to be rendered, which is not reserved by the floating objects are assigned to house the text objects in step 190. Again, the area is segmented into a series of geometric rectangles (step 180) adjacent to the floating object areas, and the text object areas are linked together in a linked list (step 200), the traversal of the linked list defining the text object path.

Finally, the floating objects are inserted sequentially into the floating object list beginning at the head of the floating object list, and the text objects are inserted sequentially into the text object list beginning at the head of the text object list in step 210. In step 220, the original data received are delivered in the desired output format with the desired layout and displayed if necessary in step 230.

By way of example, data initially received in XML format and whose presentation is defined with XSL syntax, are parsed to identify text objects and floating objects, then a desired output format and layout defined by PDF is used to populate the text and floating objects into that desired rendered format. This is done by initially assuming that the output data to render are a single rectangle, and then subtracting from

that rectangle a series of linked rectangles which define a linked list, the elements of the list are the rectangles housing the floating objects. The remaining areas in the output data not occupied by the floating objects define a series of rectangles adjacent to the floating objects which are linked together, the elements of this list are the rectangular areas which house the text objects. Finally, the floating objects and the text objects are streamed sequentially into the head of their respective lists to populate the output data which are rendered in PDF.

Fig. 3 illustrates a diagram of a system for rendering electronic data. The system of Fig. 3 comprises a processor 240, a formatting software 250, electronic data 260, text objects 270, floating objects 280, a layout data format definition 290, and a rendered electronic data 300. Initially a formatting software 250 is resident on a processor 240, this processor 240 need not be a computer but, rather, any device capable of utilizing a processor.

The formatting software 250 receives electronic data 260, these data are in a defined data format recognized by the formatting software 250, or structured in consistent way such that the formatting software 250 can readily decompose these electronic data 260 into their constituent text objects 270 and floating objects 280. Next, the formatting software 250 generates a series of rectangular areas 290 for the floating objects 280 and for the text objects 270 to produce rendered data 300. Rectangular areas for like objects are linked together to form a linked list and the objects are streamed sequentially into the list beginning at the head of the list.

Fig. 4 illustrates a block diagram of one embodiment for electronic data. Fig. 4 further illustrates the discussion of the prior Figs., namely, rendered electronic data P1

310 are comprised of floating objects (I1 410, I2 420, and I3 430) and text objects (T1 320, T2 330, T3 340, T4 350, and T5 355). Initially P1 310 is a single rectangle, where floating objects are desired to be placed, these floating objects are enclosed in a geometric rectangle shape, which is readily calculated by the floating objects dimensions and placed in the desired locations of data P1 310. These floating object rectangles are linked together to form a linked list identified by the path I1' 440 – I2' 450 – I3' 460. I1' 440 is the head of the floating object list while I3' 460 is the tail.

After the placement of the floating objects are determined, the text object areas are defined by geometric rectangles which remain in these data and lie adjacent to the floating object rectangles. The series of these rectangles are likewise linked together to form a linked list defined by the path T1' 360 – T2' 370 – T3' 380 – T4' 390 – T5' 400. T1' 360 is the head of the text object list while T5' 400 is the tail.

As one skilled in the art will appreciate, these geometric areas are readily ascertainable and calculated by the dimensions of the floating objects and the dimensions of the rendered data. This, therefore, provides a unique and efficient mechanism within which electronic data may be efficiently rendered.

Fig. 5 illustrates a transition diagram of one embodiment for rendered electronic data. These data A 470 initially are a single rectangle A1, the area of which is calculated by multiplying the length and the width of the rectangle. If a floating object I1 520, such as an image, is desired in these data, then these data would transition initially to A' 480 including a rectangle I1 520 housing the floating object, and the area A1' 510 representing the remaining area of the initial rectangle A1 500. Once the rectangle I1 520 is subtracted from the initial rectangle A1 500, the rendered data transition to A" 490 where three

additional rectangles A1" 530, A2" 540, and A3" 550 are constructed adjacent to rectangle I1 520. These additional rectangles define the area within which the text objects will be placed, and they are linked together so as to form a linked list.

Fig. 6 illustrates a block diagram of one embodiment for electronic data presentation. In Fig. 6, it is demonstrated how more complex data layouts may be rendered using rectangles to form columns C1 570 and C2 580 in rendered data P 560. As previously discussed, text objects are formed by rectangular areas T1 590, T2 600, T3 610, and T4 620. However, in Fig. 6 higher level objects may be defined by rectangles in the rendered data as well such as columns C1 570 and C2 580. C1 570 includes text objects T1 590, T2 600, T3 610, floating object I1 630, but not text object T4 620 and not floating object F1 640 (indicative of a footnote body), these latter two objects reside in the rectangle defining column C2 580. In this way, rectangles may be used to represent highly complex tables in rendered data or other constructs.

Fig. 7 illustrates a transition diagram of one embodiment for rendered electronic data. Electronic data A 650 is initially comprised of text objects T1 670 and T2 680 and it is desired that a floating object I1 690 be placed roughly in the center of data A 650. In accordance with the present invention data A 650 transitions to data A' 660 comprised of 6 text object rectangles T1' 700, T2' 710, T3 720, T4 730, T5 740, T6 750, and the newly inserted floating object I1 690.

Fig. 8 illustrates a diagram of one embodiment for wrapping text. As previously indicated, text objects and floating objects are inserted into their respective areas by traversing a linked list which defines the path the objects are to take in the rendered data. In Fig. 8 text rectangle T1 760 contains text object 780 (word "inserting") which is at the



